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UFS Rugby Dons Old Flag

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UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
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UFS Rugby dons old flag

Mmasetshaba Tshwene
f IRAWA

Rugby is a sport predominantly supported by the white Afrikaans population and in Bloemfontein it has been the setting for many racially based altercations. The most infamous example would be the February 2016 assault of student protesters by white rugby spectators at Shimla Park.

At the University of the Free State Rugby has become synonymous with racism and Shimla Park seems to be a festering ground for racism on the Bloemfontein campus. I am persuaded to believe that rugby games at this institution, rather than being recreational moments, normalise white racism. Beyond its identification as a catalyst for violent protest, not enough has been done to investigate the power of the 'mob mentality' in perpetuating racism among white students on campus.

Most recently a group of white supporters attended a rugby game at Shimla Park at the University of the Free State where the South African national anthem was sung. The three men and a woman remained seated while the anthem was being sung and only stood when the Afrikaans part of the song started, this was a clear disrespect of the languages and cultures in the Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrica as a national anthem.

Considering the history of the Afrikaans part of the anthem, the behaviour of these three white spectators undeniably bore a sharp racist undertone. The Shimla's went on to be dominated by the competition, losing the game 12points to UJ's 49points.

The South African National anthem consists of 5 languages; isiXhosa, isiZulu, seSotho, English and Afrikaans, some would say that this is a wonderful way to showcase that our country is a melting pot of diverse cultures. The anthem itself as a combination of two songs reflects the nation's urge towards unity.

Enoch Sontonga's Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrica was originally composed as a hymn and later adopted as an anthem of the anti-apartheid struggle. Alternately, [REDACTED], written by C.J. Langenhoven, was the anthem for a racist illegitimate regime ruled by a white minority from 1957 to 1994. There have previously been public demands to remove [REDACTED] from the national anthem given its barbarism of the history which it represents. An anthem is supposed to unify a people of a country. Refusing to stand for the national anthem is both an unpatriotic and rude gesture against one's fellow countrymen.

Perhaps, white students would sing the entire national anthem of the democratic Republic of South Africa if other white students criticized them for not doing so. Perhaps if the Shimlas stopped being held up as the paragon of sports on campus we wouldn't have this problem. Unfortunately, we do; it rears its head again and again like a stubborn tumour in the body of a stubborn

smoker.

On every single occasion I attend a rugby game I see the looks I am given and hear the snide comments. As a black female I do not feel comfortable at Rugby games, I feel out of place and unwanted in the supporter stands. Beyond feeling uncomfortable at these games I also feel unsafe gripped by the constant anxiety that someone may feel comfortable to do or say things to me because of the colour of my skin.

Racism is a perpetual cycle that even the "born-frees" have got themselves stuck in and incidents like the one at Shimla park illustrate how much further we will all have to push ourselves and each other to learn to live in unity. Likewise, sports should be a tool to create unity and comradeship. Rugby at the University of the Free State is a sport which has failed to do this by neglecting the transformation of institutional cultures which surround the sport.



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FOOD REVIEW

Beef and Reef;
a restaurant not quite
as flame grilling as Spur.



commend that I go grab a bite there. Despite being a misfit to the family-friendly atmosphere of Mimosa mall, it does have its perks as a rebel. The restaurant has a friendly and warm style of reception despite it's fairly tiny and very impersonal setup. The prices are reasonable; cheaper than most restaurants, it supports a student budget. What particularly caught my eye were the "all day specials" which

to my hometown on days when I miss the sound of the waves crashing onto the shore at dusk. The Chef's Choice for the day; 1kg Ribs with a half kilogram of Prawns looked inviting enough. However, my heart was won over by the understated Chicken Schnitzel and Ribs. As eager as my taste-buds were for the unlikely duo, the 45-minute long wait for the meal coaxed me even further to the edge of my

seasoning, however, was not the most imaginative. The cheese sauce was bland but fixable with some black pepper. The chips yearned for a more generous spicing. The ribs were more burnt than I would have preferred. The oft-desired smokey accent that gives grilling its prime allure came off instead as an ashy aftertaste which I couldn't wash down quick enough. The saviour of it all was